

RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

COME NOW, AND LET US REASON TOGETHER.—ISAIAH I. 18.

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[NO. 5.]

DISCOURSE,

[CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 26.]

"And the Serpent said unto the woman ye shall not surely die."—Genesis iii. 4.

It is very evident that Protestants, in endeavouring to avoid one extreme of error, have run into another. Thus, the doctrine of God's sovereignty, exhibited in particular electing grace and reprobating justice, was introduced to meet the Popish doctrine of personal merit, "that a man might do works sufficient to ensure his own salvation, and even more than was necessary, the surplus of which he could transfer to another."

This system of Calvin, was regulated by the celebrated Dr. Edwards, who added to it the discoveries of a Spanish priest, made in 1631, which was that of "disinterested benevolence." This system was improved by Dr. Hopkins, and now forms the basis of the Calvinistic churches.

This system deserves examination, as the liberality of its professors leads them to regard every thing as heterodox, which comports not with their views, and who are the original discoverers that the devil was the first Universalist preacher.

Dr. Hopkins declares, that "God was the author of Adam's sin," in support of which, Dr. Emmons says, "By immediately acting on the heart with energy to produce the volition, God produces every sinful act, and in this manner from the beginning to the end of life, does God reprobate every sinner that is lost." Calvin says, "There is an eternal determination, which respects all actions, beings, and events. Predestination we call the eternal decree of God, whereby he had it determined by himself, what he willed to become of every man---God not only foresaw the fall of the first man, and in him the ruin of his posterity; but also disposed it after his own will. The fall of man proceeded from the wondrous counsel of God."

Here then we have a doctrine claiming to have its origin in God—the benevolent Father of our spirits, and the giver of every good and every perfect gift, which declares that God is the author of sin, and that from the beginning to the end of life, produces every sinful action in man, and then makes forever miserable a large portion of his creatures for sinning.

We inquire—if this doctrine be true, what agency has that being called the devil, in man's sinning? what is there for him to do? God creates men—some he intends for happiness, others for misery. To show his sovereign power, he involves all in sin, that he may save whom he pleases, and eternally damn the rest. This being the case, the devil must be a mere passive being. God it is that directs the serpent to tempt men, produces the sin, and directs every thought and action in life. Could this devil, if he had the power, have devised a system which would have suited himself better? It may be said, yes, by making all men miserable: is he, then, so much wiser than God, who could not devise a better system, than that of making some miserable, in order that the greatest happiness might be produced? The greatest possible misery may be produced by allowing some to be happy, that the damned may see what they might have enjoyed, and thus be more miserable.

If this system be true, the Almighty has been working in

a great measure for his adversary, by making beings, then causing them to sin, and exercising his justice in making them forever as wretched as the devil could wish them to be.

Now if God is the author of sin, and according to Dr. Emmons, by acting upon the heart with energy, produces every sinful action from the beginning to the end of life; if the doctrine of Universal Salvation is of the devil, and the preaching of it a sin, it is God who produces it; if it is a delusion to deceive mankind, and lead them to everlasting woe, it is sent of God to effect that end. Therefore, to oppose that sentiment, is to oppose God, and to attempt to frustrate his designs; and that man is as much serving God in preaching and believing all men will be saved, as the preachers and believers of the Calvinistic doctrine. In a word, there is no such thing as serving the devil, if God directs every volition and action, all are serving God.

But what kind of disposition does this doctrine infuse into the mind? Does it produce meekness, gentleness, brotherly kindness, and charity? No, none of these things. It rather destroys all sociability, and infuses a spirit of pride, saying, "stand by thyself, come not nigh, for I am holier than thou;" it leads to defamation of character, and causes men to speak evil of all who differ from them in matters of religion. The cry is delusion, devil's doctrine, &c. and this often without the least examination.

The Saviour said, the tree is known by its fruit. Again, by their fruits ye shall know them.—"The spirit by which a man is governed, is known by his words and actions."

If God be a being who delights in goodness, those who are governed by his spirit, will delight in the exercise of that goodness, and rejoice in the universal display of mercy and grace.

If the devil is a being who delights in misery, then they, if any there are, who are governed by the spirit of evil, will delight in the eternal perpetuity of misery, and will redouble their diligence in searching the scriptures, and exerting their ingenuity in laborious study, to prove that the glory of God, and the greatest possible good requires the endless misery of a portion of the human race.

To close the subject, let it be observed, that the Universalists believe in the denunciation of God. "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" the serpent to the contrary notwithstanding. They believe that man did die on the day of transgression. That to be carnally minded is death. They believe that the wages of sin is death, and that the soul that sinneth shall die. And they also believe, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But they likewise believe, the promises of God. That the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, that in Christ all the nations, kindreds and families of the earth shall be blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. That Jesus will reign until he hath put all his enemies under his feet, and the last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death; that Christ will destroy him that hath the power of death, that is the devil. Destroy the works of the devil. In a word, Christ will finish sin; make an end of transgression; destroy the reign and kingdom of the devil; subdue all things to himself; deliver the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.

Is this preaching the devil's doctrine, or can it be believed

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that the serpent preached this doctrine in the garden, even declaring his own overthrow?

It will be said that it is the devil's doctrine, in that it declares that men will be happy in sin. This is not true, we believe in the divine declaration, which in a voice of thunder, says, "There is no peace to the wicked." We unequivocally declare, that "the wages of sin is death." "The wicked are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest." We preach salvation *from* sin, not *in* sin; we preach deliverance to captives, the reign of righteousness and of glory. We persuade men to trust in God, and confide in his holy promises; to look to him as their Father and Friend; return to obedience, and serve the Lord with all their heart.

But as it was in the beginning, so it is now. In the beginning God said, "ye shall surely die." The serpent said, "ye shall not surely die." Man believed, disobeyed, and died. God in mercy sent his Son to save the world. He saith, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." The spirit of unbelief saith, "He did not mean all, only some of all, the elect." Christ says, "Because I live, ye shall live also;" but we are told, that "he meant the elect, and them only shall live with him." God has declared by his apostles, that he "will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth;" but the enemy says, "it only means that God is willing—He has no determinate will to save any but the elect." Thus he endeavours to sow the seeds of distrust, doubt, and fear.

From the (Portland) Christian Intelligencer.

THE CHRISTIAN OPTULATOR.....No. VI.

WHAT IS THE TRUE SIGNIFICATION OF THE WORD HELL?

The next passage, in which the word *hell* is found, is in Job xxvi. 6, "Dead things are found from under the waters and the inhabitants thereof. Hell is naked before him, (God,) and destruction has no covering." Is any thing derived here from the use of the word *hell*, which involves the idea that it must be a place in another state of existence, for the endless punishment of the wicked? Will any one say, that it must mean this, because it is described as being "naked before God"? Then a great number of things give us to understand, that they too are places of eternal misery. The heart of man is naked before God—the intestines of this globe are exposed to his view. In short, there is nothing hidden from him—nothing but is naked before him. Yet surely we should arrive at an unprecedented climax of logic to maintain that a thing is a literal everlasting burning, merely because it is naked before God. The truth is, there is nothing in the passage, which intimates a state of misery after death. "Hades, or the grave, is naked before God;" and he can destroy the nations with his judgments, and confine them "under the waters."

Psaln ix. 17. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God." If, because the wicked shall be turned into hell, we are necessarily to understand that they shall suffer eternally, you will perceive that it carries the argument farther than any one would wish to have it. It proves too much, and therefore proves nothing. For if it proves any thing, according to the common opinion, it proves that every member of the human family will be eternally miserable; "for all have sinned"—all are wicked. It does not say, that, those who die without experiencing religion, shall be endlessly tormented; it says that "the wicked shall be turned into hell." The word "wicked" must be taken here, according to every rule of grammar, "in its widest sense." Now as all are wicked, and as it says, they shall be turned into hell, you will perceive it will not answer to call it a place of eternal misery. But it will do to consider it a figurative expres-

sion, designed to represent those inward distresses of mind arising from guilt. This all the wicked do, and must experience; because sin, naturally and inevitably, begets misery. Mankind, whether we consider them individually or collectively, do, according to the above calculation, bring themselves into misery.

Psaln xvi. 10. "My flesh shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thy holy one to see corruption." David, as the type of Christ, intends here to represent what did actually take place: That Christ should die, descend into hell (hades,) and that he should rise again from hell. *Hell*, here, means the literal grave or sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea, and nothing more.

Psaln lv. 15. "Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quickly into hell" (hades.) This passage requires no comment, as its literal intention is so manifest. *Hell*, here signifies the literal grave. Certainly there is nothing in the text which gives *hell* the signification of endless misery. Neither can we suppose that David or any other man possessing one spark of benevolence, could pray for his enemies' eternal misery.

Psaln lxxxvi. 13. "Great is thy mercy towards me, and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell." It appears, then, that David's *soul* was in the *lowest hell*, and that he was *delivered* from it, and *all this before he died*. *Hell*, here signifies a place of mental distress.

Psaln cxvi. 13. "The sorrows of hell compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me. I found trouble and sorrow." This text, being the language of David expressed in nearly the same words with 2 Sam. xxii. 6, which we have before considered, needs no other attention in this place, than merely to remark, that if the sorrows and pains of hell *gat* hold on David, while he was living, and from them he was *delivered*, we can have no possible ground to suppose, that the word *hell* as here used, denotes a place of *future* misery from which there is no deliverance.

Psaln cxxxix. 8. "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there thy hand shall lead me, and thy right hand hold me." This passage is a parallel one with Job xi. 3, upon which we have remarked. It goes to describe the omnipresence and protection of God, which extend even to hell, or the lowermost boundary, which the sacred writer could use to imply the idea, that even in the centre of the earth, God exists, supporting. The depth, the height, the length, the breadth of God's presence, he compares to the most extreme limits of nature. And it is worthy of remark, for our consolation, that it is not only omnipresent, but the sweet singer of Israel represents him in all those distant places, even in hell, as leading us, providing we could reach them, (which, indeed, is impossible) with his own kind hand, and holding us in his right hand of protection.

Prov. v. 3. "Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell." Solomon, being the son of David, had learned to make the same free use of this word, and with the same signification that his father had before him. In this passage he shows us, what experience has ever confirmed, that the paths of vice and dissipation, lead to misery, and generally to a premature death; and that the grave is the next house to, if we may be allowed the expression, the chamber of the lustful. Because the feet of the foolish woman, go down to death, and her steps take hold on *hell*, there is no ground for inferring, that her steps take hold on endless torments. It must first be proved, that there is a place of eternal misery, and that the word *hell* is the proper name for it, before we can maintain that this latter term means the former. But as far as we have gone, we have found, that the word, *hell*, in no instance, can apply to such a place. We therefore maintain, that to make the word, in its present situation, refer to what it is commonly supposed it does refer to, is a gross violation of terms, and

what no person, if he had any plausible argument on his side, would resort to.

Prov. vii. 27. "Her house is in the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." ix. 13. "But he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell." These two passages have a great similarity with the last examined, they require no more of our observations here, than to remark, that they happily confirm the observations, which were last made. In the former passage, "Her house is in the way to hell, going down" where? to endless burnings? No. To the chambers of the dead. In the second, hell is said to be inhabited by the dead, generally; a strong confirmation that the grave is the true meaning of the wise man.

Prov. x. 11. "Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more the hearts of the children of men?" If hell and destruction are endless misery, because they are before the Lord, (and this is the only descriptive intimation in the text, as in Job xxvi. 6.) then also must the hearts of the children of men be places of greater endless misery (if the solecism may be pardoned) for they are more exposed to his view. See our remarks in the passage referred to.

Verse 24. "The way of life is above, to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath." For the same reason, as we before remarked, that the courses of vice and licentiousness serve to ruin health, to shorten life, and to lead, consequently, to death—to *hades*, hell beneath; so virtue, temperance and frugality, by promoting cheerfulness and health, lead to life and peace. It is an established truth, that the ways of wisdom are the ways of pleasantness; that, in doing the commandments there is great reward; that in discharging our duty, consists our greatest pleasures; while the ways of sin lead to moral death and misery, and the way of the transgressor is hard. The life of the righteous shall be prolonged—while the wicked shall not live out half his days.

ORIGEN.

From the (Buffalo) Gospel Advocate.

CHRIST'S COMING TO JUDGMENT.

A Lecture on 2 Thess. i. 6--10, delivered at Rochester, N. Y. Nov. 24th, 1823, by the Rev. J. S. THOMPSON.

Since I have begun to labour in the vineyard of my Lord, as a minister of the EVERLASTING GOSPEL, the subject of this Lecture has frequently been alleged by my opponents, as an unequivocal demonstration of human woe in a future mode of existence; and an insurmountable obstacle to the progress of the doctrine of Universal Salvation. A variety of circumstances has called the attention of the public to this passage of scripture, as a dernier resort of the opposers of universalism; and it has been selected seven times by different clergymen, in the vicinity of this populous and growing village, in their attempts to overthrow or establish the ABRAHAMIC FAITH. I have therefore undertaken to show, that this portion of sacred scripture relates to the severe chastisements of God, inflicted on the Jews for rejecting our Lord and persecuting his followers; and that it has no allusion whatever to the destiny of men in another and unseen world. The discussion of this contested and alarming passage shall be conducted according to the following arrangement.

1. I shall endeavor to render the translation more correct and agreeable to the original Greek.

2. I speak of the time, manner, signs, and end of Christ's coming.

1. The Greek preposition *meta* signifies in company; co-operation in the same design; adherence to the same party. The original meaning of the word appears to have been a conductor whom others accompany. Hence the phrase, *thle-bomenois meth henon*, maybe rendered, our fellow-sufferers; and *meth angelon*, co-operating with, or conducting his

messengers as a leader or captain. Accordingly the seventh verse will read, "rest to you our fellow-sufferers at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, co-operating with his mighty messengers," i. e. conducting the Roman army to inflict the long predicted woes on the Jewish people and nation. The phrase *dikentlein*, in the ninth verse, answers to the *penas dare* of Virgil, and signifies to pay justice, atone, expiate, or suffer. This is the constant and I may add the almost invariable meaning of the above phrases in the best Latin and Greek classics. The ninth verse ought therefore to read, "who shall suffer, *olethron aionion*, a union loss from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his majesty." Is. ii. 19, 21. The term, *olethron*, translated destruction has induced many to adopt the unmerciful and unscriptural notion of the annihilation of the wicked. But this fanciful opinion must have originated from inattention to the scriptural and classical use of the term as well as to the doctrine of the everlasting gospel. *Ollumi*, in Greek, *perco* in Latin, *perdre* in French, and *perish* in English, are terms frequently used to express apprehensions of some impending danger. *Olethron* derived from *ollumi*, may therefore be correctly translated loss. Moreover, what Paul calls tribulation in the sixth verse, is denominated destruction, in the ninth. Where Luke uses the word *apolesai*, to destroy, Matthew employs the term *basanizai*, to torment. Though both the evangelists intended to communicate the same idea. Luke iv. 34. Mat. viii. 29. When Matthew speaks of *destroying both soul and body in Gehennah*, Mat. x. 23, Luke xii. 5. If the wicked be annihilated on account of their iniquity, how can the reward be according to works? But the uniform language of scripture declares both the righteous and the wicked shall be recompensed for their deeds; and men shall be beaten with many or few stripes in proportion as they have been more or less vicious in their moral conduct. If the phrase *to be no more*, Ps. civ. 5, Lam. v. 7, which in several languages implies to die, mean utter and perpetual extinction of being, then Enoch, Joseph and Daniel must have been annihilated. Gen. v. 24; xlii. 13, and Ps. xxxix. 13. If the second death, which Whittly on my text shows from the targums of Onkelos, Uziel, and Jerusalem to be a proverbial expression denoting the correction of the impious, mean annihilation, then those who are cast into the lake of fire cannot be tormented day and night; nor can the wrath of God abide on unbelievers. Rev. xiv. 11, John iii. 36. But Israel who destroyed himself. Hos. xiii. 9; the son perdition, 2 Thess. ii. 3, the wicked whom the Lord will destroy, 2 Thess. i. 8, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, 2 Thess. i. 9, and will utterly perish, Deut. iv. 26, Josh. xxiii. 16, and Deut. xxx. 18, was no other, in the opinion of Lightfoot, Le Clerk, Hammond, and other able commentators, than the Jewish nation, which as a body politic and ecclesiastical was destroyed or dispersed forever. Notwithstanding, if ever the design of God in creating intelligent beings, the objects of Christ's mediatorial kingdom, or the covenant and promises of God, be accomplished, the soul-chilling doctrines of annihilation and endless misery will then be demonstrated equally false and delusive. Let the believers of destruction reflect on the character of that God who, though he brings to destruction the sons of men, yet saith to them return again, Ps. xc. 3; and who declares that not one grain of that Israel whom he destroyed, should perish. Amos ix. 9; and then let them say whether God shall deliver from destruction agreeably to Ps. cxlii. 20? If the above criticism be correct, my text will read thus, "seeing it is righteous with God to recompense tribulation to them who trouble you, but rest to you our fellow sufferers, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, as a flame of fire, co-operating with his powerful messengers (the Roman army) administering justice to those who neither honor God nor obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall suffer a union loss (being excluded till the fulness of the Gentiles come) from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his majesty."

As I have adopted the term *aionian* instead of everlasting, some explanation may be necessary. It is derived from the noun *aion*, which, Phavorinus says, signifies *he zoe kai ho bios*, life, or *to metron tes anthropines zoes*, the measure or length of human life. The word *age* is the most appropriate in the English language to express the signification of the Greek *aion*. Thus we speak of the age of a child, the age of a man, the antediluvian age, the Patriarchal age, the christian age, and the age of the world. In all these examples, we find the term *age* varied, and the extent of its duration known only by the qualifying words or phrases with which it is connected; for by the above example the word *age* may indefinitely denote a period of one year, fifty years, two thousand years, or five thousand years, as the sense may require. The Hebrew *olam* translated *aion* in the septuagint, and correctly rendered into English by our translators only once, Ephes. ii. 7, by the word *age*, signifies a concealed or unknown period of time, whose duration, like the terms *aion* and *age*, can only be measured by the subject to which it is applied. The Hebrew slave who stipulated to serve his master, *od olam*, sept. *eis aiona*, English *for ever*, Ex. xxi. 6. Deut. xv. 17, did not thereby agree to serve for any definite period of time; for the duration of his servitude entirely depended on the following circumstances. 1. His own death. 2. The death of his master. 3. The return of the jubilee. Which ever of these occurred first, dissolved the agreement, and effected the termination of that indefinite period indicated by the phrase *od olam*, *eis aiona*, forever. Accordingly the same phrase as translated *forever*, all the days of his life, as long as he liveth. 1 Sam. i. 11, 22, 23. Hence we see the Hebrew *od olam*, the Greek *eis aiona*, and the English *forever*, or everlasting, expressive of the duration of the Hebrew's servitude, or Samuel's life might have indicated a period of one week, three days, as in Jonah ii. 6, or one year, but could not exceed the time of 48 years; for every 49th year brought again the return of jubilee. How despicable then must those doughty champions of orthodoxy and advocates of endless misery, appear to intelligent readers or hearers, when they urge the argument for eternal misery from the term *aion*, as implying eternal duration; whilst the very highest classical authority limits the term to the length of human life. Isocrates and Xenophon say *ton aiona diagein*, to pass the time of life. *Telculeuai ton aiona*, in Herodotus and Sophocles signifies, to end life, or die. Homer uses *aion* frequently as the synonyme of *zoe*, life, Il. iv. 473, Il. v. 635, and Il. xvi. 453. And sometimes for the period of a short life lost in battle. *Ho nun aion*, in the scriptures, always signifies the present life. See Whitby on Ephes. ii. 2; 2 Tim. iv. 10; Mark x. 30. Surely if the word *aion* imply eternal duration, Christ and his apostles must have been very ignorant of its meaning; for he tells them, the harvest, or founding of the christian church, is the end of the *aion*. Mat. xiii. 39. Lo I am with you till the end of the *aion*. Mat. xxviii. 20. And they ask him what shall be the signs of the end of the world, *aion*. Mat. xxiv. 3. Moreover the writers of the New Testament speak of a time before the *aions* began. 1 Cor. ii. 7. The beginning of the *aions*, Ephes. iii. 9; Col. i. 26; of the end of the *aions*, Heb. ix. 26; of *aions* past and *aions* to come, Col. i. 26; Ephes. ii. 7; of a period which shall last through the *aion* of *aions*, Ephes. iii. 21; of a time after the *aions* shall be ended, and of a period hyperbolically exceeding *aionian*. 2 Cor. iv. 17; and lastly of the formation, or constitution of the *aions*, Heb. i. 2. Do our doctors know these things? If not, are are they not shamefully ignorant? If they do, ought not their efforts to impose on the credulous, induce us to beware of them in time to come? Felix quem aliena periculo cautum.

Having ascertained the import of the word *aion*, nothing more is needful than only to mention that *aionios* is derived from *aion* exactly as the word *yearly* from *year*, or *daily* from *day*; and as *aion* can never imply infinite duration, the *aionion* loss or destruction must be temporary. This

view of the subject entirely excludes the doctrine of annihilation as well as that of endless misery; and at once pronounces the reign of evil or loss to be limited, and followed by blissful succession of ages, producing streams of pure perennial felicity, lasting and perpetual as the existence of Deity, and universal as the whole number of intellectual beings throughout his vast empire. Here, I conclude this part of my discourse by observing, that the *aionion* loss mentioned in my text, is the *aionion* correction, (as the word implies, Mat. xxv. 46, 1 John iv. 13, see Petit Pierre, on the Divine Goodness,) whose duration and termination is distinctly fixed by the apostle to the time of the fulness of the Gentiles, Rom. xi. 25. Then will the *aions* terminate, Eph. i. 10. And all Israel will be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation!

2. I shall now proceed to consider the time, manner, signs, and end of Christ's coming.

1. The Time. The coming of Christ called by Paul *Parousia ton Kurion*. 2 Thess. ii. 1. is by the learned Dr. Hammond, referred to his coming to destroy the Jewish nation and worship. To this period, says Dr. Whitby, the apostle James most certainly alludes where he exhorts the brethren to be patient till the coming of the Lord: adding this *parousia*, or coming of the Lord, is at hand, and the judge standeth before the door. James v. 7-9. This is the coming of the Son, so often mentioned in the prophecies, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jewish nation. Mat. xxiv. 27, 37, 39. This appearance of the Son of Man, was immediately to follow the tribulation of the Jews, occasioned by the invasion of the Roman army. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall appear the sign of the Son in Heaven---and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." Mat. xxiv. 29, 30. For there shall be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people---and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles; then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Luke xxi. 23, 27. The time of Christ's coming was so distinctly fixed, that none could possibly mistake. There be some of you standing here, said our Lord to his disciples, who shall not taste death till ye see the Son of Man come in his kingdom. Mat. xvi. 28. Mark ix. 1. Luke ix. 27. When they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another, for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come. Mat. x. 23. This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled. Mat. xxiv. 34. Mark xiii. 30. Luke xxi. 32. This prediction was verified in John, and explains our Lord's meaning. John xxi. 22. If he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Indeed the language of Christ could not be more definite and determinate than it was in reply to the high Priest's adjuration. Mat. xxvi. 64. HAPRTI, presently, after a short time, ye shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven. Accordingly both Christ and his apostles warn their auditors to watch, and be prepared for that event, seeing it might be both sudden and unexpected. Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh. Matt. xxiv. 44. Paul exhorts the Phillippians to moderation, and adds as a reason, the Lord is at hand. Phil. iv. 5. He adviseth the Thessalonians not to sleep as others, but to watch and be sober; and appeals to their own knowledge of the uncertainty of Christ's coming, as an argument for vigilance. *Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night. But ye are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a Thief.* 1 Thess. v. 2, iv. 6. In like manner Peter admonishes all to whom his epistle might come, to be sober and watch unto prayer, because the end of all things was at hand, and Christ was ready to judge both the quick and the dead. 1 Peter iv. 5, 7. Behold I come quickly, says Jesus, he that is unjust, let him be unjust still. Seal not the prophecies of this book for the time is at hand. Rev. xxii. 10, 12. What shall we say of these

preachers who 1750 years after these predictions have been fulfilled, still persuade their hearers to expect Christ's coming to judgment? Let us pity them!! For either the scriptures are a forgery, or these teachers of the law, know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm!!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

COMMUNICATIONS.

FOR THE INQUIRER.

'They also that erred in spirit, shall come to understanding.'
To the members of the First Ecclesiastical Society in Hartford.

Dear Brethren and Sisters—As the discourses of your pastor, delivered in your hearing on the 16th of November last, are considered by some of you, as proving incontestibly, the unutterable and interminable misery of a portion of men, I take the privilege of addressing to you some observations, on the subject, which I trust your candour will not deem impertinent. I have waited thus long, under the impression that the discourses would be published. But having been disappointed in this expectation, I shall now lay before you the result of my investigations, elicited by a careful review agreeable to the best of my recollection.

As Christians, it is evidently our duty, not merely to search the Scriptures, and ascertain if these things are so, but also to *prove* all things, and to hold fast that which is good. If the doctrine of your pastor is correct, it will not lose a particle of its value by investigation: if a free and candid examination shall result in a demonstration of its fallacy, we shall obviously be the gainers by weighing in the impartial scales of truth, those facts and arguments by which alone it can be disproved.

It is much to be regretted, that, after laying down judicious rules for understanding the Scriptures, he should see proper to depart from these rules; because, in the mind of a careful hearer, it must indicate, either that his rules were unimportant, and expressed without due consideration; or, that in adhering to them, the arguments intended to elucidate the subject, would fall short of their design. The substance of the rules laid down by him on that occasion, you will probably recognize in the following: viz.

1. To explain the passages which are apparently obscure, by those which are plain and unequivocal.
2. To understand the language of the Sacred Scriptures by the usages established for understanding other writings.

As both these rules obviously inculcate the examination of each passage in its connexion, and evidently embrace whatever may tend to illustrate the subject, I most cordially assent to their adoption.

The frequent use of the text in various sermons and religious publications, leaves no room to doubt that it is considered as one of the strongest testimonies in favour of the common sentiment which the Bible can furnish. Viewing it in this light, let us examine it with all that patient and candid attention which its importance demands.

These shall go away into everlasting punishment.
Matthew xxv. 46.

It was said by the preacher, that the subject of which the text is a part, commences with the 31st verse. However unwilling we are to allow this as a *fact*, we can have no objection to try the result of an examination which will test it as a *theory*. Let us read it together.

V. 31. When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

You will be pleased to bear in mind, that the doctrine supposed to be taught in the text, is founded on the presumption, that the *time* here alluded to relates entirely to the resurrection state. If it *does*, the fact must be embraced in the following verses; for the dullest apprehension is hardly so obtuse as to believe it is contained in the verses quoted above. Be pleased to examine the whole passage in your Bibles, and ascertain for yourselves, whether one word in that connexion points to a state which is now future. If you can, Mr. Hawes will give you thanks, for he, certainly, cannot discover it.

I presume you will recollect, that your preacher relied on three circumstances in support of his hypothesis.

1. On the use of the word translated *everlasting* and *eternal*. This word, he asserted, was the strongest in the Greek language, used to express *endless*. If he will examine in his Greek Testament, the word translated *endless*, in Heb. vii. 16. he will possibly discover that his assertion is erroneous. It is presumed he well knows that the word alluded to is *equivocal*, and that the nature and circumstances of the subject determine its meaning. Indeed, his own definition is sufficient in the case before us. He defined it to mean, "the longest possible duration of the thing spoken of."

Sin and suffering are cause and consequence, or the Bible is of no more value to us than the absurd legends of the dark ages. But the Scriptures testify abundantly of the blotting out of transgression, the end of sin and suffering, and the return of the whole human family to the Father of their spirits. The prophet Isaiah, speaks on the subject thus; "I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; [why?] for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made." From numerous, clear, and unequivocal testimonies, we learn the termination of suffering on account of sin, and that the reign of righteousness and peace shall be universal.

It therefore follows, beyond controversy, that even if we should concede the point, viz. that the subject in hand relates to another state of existence, the punishment spoken of could not be endless, unless we set at nought the most absolute and unequivocal declarations of holy writ.

2. The general acceptance of this passage by the Christian public. As this appears much more like an apology for an argument, than the argument itself, it needs but a brief notice. Let us but inquire how opinions are handed down from father to son—how we almost inhale them with our infantile food—and how assiduously they are taught us in our catechisms, our schools, and in various other methods, and we shall be able in good measure to appreciate the value of any opinion, merely by its popularity. The Rev. Thomas Scott gives it as the result of his observation, that a very small proportion of men adopt their sentiments from a careful investigation, or even from the higher degrees of probability. But on a subject which we are called upon to examine by the *evidence* of testimony to be drawn from the Scriptures, the result of which involves consequences the most important, it surely violates our better sense of propriety, to call in the aid of opinions *already formed* on the subject, rather than to exercise our faculties in the *investigation* of those opinions. If general opinion is the test of truth in religious concerns, the surest method of perpetuating orthodox principles is to prohibit the free circulation of the Scriptures.

3. The grandeur and sublimity of the language. If indeed, magnificent language must of *course* be used only in describing the dreadful catastrophe which common opinion ascribes to this text, the "volume of the book" is filled with "sad tidings of bad things" indeed. Witness the beautiful language of David in the 96th and 98th Psalms, where he speaks of God as "coming to judge the earth," and calls upon the heavens to rejoice and the earth to be glad in consequence of His manifestation to "judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."

It is said, that as the prophets *sometimes* refer to more than one event by the same prediction, it is *probably* the case in this instance. This is one of the weakest subterfuges under which a distressed argument ever found shelter. To talk of *reasoning* from the language used, and then to discard the *rational use* of language, is certainly an aberration from the subject, if it is not the very *antipodes* to reasoning.

Language is the medium through which ideas are conveyed from each to others. Words are the component parts of language, and are no further useful, than as they stand for the *signs* of ideas. If the Bible is a revelation from Heaven, to whom is it given? Not to a privileged few, most certainly. If portions of it are evidently written in figurative language, plain common sense dictates, that these passages should not be so construed as to militate against the most obvious intent of the more simple and unequivocal. When men are anxious rightly to divide the word of truth, it is fair to presume that they will never draw an important doctrine by *inference*, from a parabolic passage, which is not made certain by others, whose literal intention can hardly be disputed.

As I purpose to show *conclusively*, in a future number, that the common understanding of this text is not the true one, and that it cannot possibly consist with the harmony of the Scriptures, I shall omit much which might be said on this partial view of the subject, and shall content myself for the present, with the following remarks:

In viewing the subject as commencing at the 31st verse, we have merely discovered what it does *not* prove. Even in looking at the language literally, we have discovered that it does not contain a threat of punishment in a resurrection state:—Because,

1. It was predicted to happen at the coming of the Son of Man, and not the most distant allusion is made to a resurrection.
2. The *time* of his coming, is in this partial view, entirely problematical, and therefore proves nothing.
3. The legitimate use of language points out *nations* as gathered, and *nations* as separated.
4. The use of the term *everlasting* is restrained by the nature of the subject, as we learn by a reference to other scriptures.
5. The inference which relates to the *eternal life* of the righteous falls to the ground by an understanding of that in which it consists. See John xvii.
6. It sets aside every rational idea of *proportion* in rewards and punishments, and sets those at an *infinite* distance whose conduct varies in a finite degree. It hurls to remediless woe those who merely omitted to do certain acts of kindness, and grants to others the joys of a blissful immortality, merely for exercising those kindly feelings of benevolence, *which bring their own reward*.
7. It nullifies the declaration of our Saviour, that "*men shall give into our bosoms*" the measure which we mete to others; and it absolutely contradicts the declaration of the wise man, who declares "The righteous shall be recompensed in the EARTH, *MUCH MORE*, the wicked and the sinner."

We have now looked, and looked faithfully, for any force in the language of the Scripture under examination, which can justify the common opinion respecting it. We have seen that not *one* word within the verses said to contain the whole doctrine, points to another mode of being. Not a vestige is seen of the *resurrection* state. Not a word is spoken of *individuals* in character of *sheep gone astray*. The repeated testimony of scripture respecting the final end of sin—the destruction of *devil*—and the *works* of devil—the declaration that all nations whom God hath made shall come and worship before him, and glorify his name; and various other circumstances and testimonies, all go to

prove, that, whatever may be its meaning, it *certainly does not speak of interminable misery*.

Perhaps a more comprehensive view of this subject may elicit a light, by the aid of which we shall be able to distinguish what is its true understanding. But this will be omitted to a future opportunity.

MENTOR.

RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

SATURDAY, Jan. 10, 1824.

"And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1 John iii. 3.

The first thing that presents itself on reading the above passage is, that the christian hope of life and immortality induces its possessor to purify himself from sin and iniquity; hence the possession of this hope is essentially necessary to purity and holiness of life. This being acknowledged, we may safely infer that the stronger and more steadfast the hope, the greater will be the inducement to live godly in Christ Jesus. As so much depends on the existence of hope in the human heart, we will endeavor to define the term, and inquire what constitutes a hope. Hope is said to be, "the expectation of some good; an expectation indulged with pleasure—confidence in a future event." Hope may be considered as produced by an earnest desire and expectation of good on the one hand, and evidence of the probability or certainty of the attainment of that good on the other. We cannot hope for that which is disagreeable to us, or calculated to do us an injury, nor can we hope for that, however desirable in itself, of which we have not the least possible evidence that we shall ever be able to possess or enjoy. The reason why men drop into despondency which ends in despair, is, the anxious desire that reigns in the heart to possess some object or good which is beyond our reach; and as we cannot quench the desire, finding it impossible to lay hold of the object, the mind sinks beneath the pressure of disappointment, and the heart breaks under the weight of its anxiety.

According then to our desires, and the weight of testimony we have, proving to the mind the certainty of obtaining the full fruition of our desires and wishes, will be the strength and energies of our hope. To possess that hope which is as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, we must have the most unequivocal testimony, yea, testimony beyond the reach of contradiction, that what we desire will be enjoyed in due time.

The object of the christian hope is life and immortality, or what is more generally termed the hope of salvation, or of being saved from all sin and misery. There is implanted in man by his merciful Creator, a desire to enjoy that happiness, of which, he is formed susceptible. Whatever are the miseries he may experience to day, man is supported in the midst of his trials with hope that they will end to-morrow, and the felicity he desires be enjoyed. Man looks forward with solicitude to another world for the participation of those pleasures which are denied him in this. To encourage him to endure the trials and afflictions incident to this life, and to give him divine consolation in the hour of sorrow, was life and immortality brought to light in the gospel, and the revelation of the will and purposes of God in respect to the future destiny of man, given to the dependent offspring of Jehovah.

But on what does christian hope rest? If we confide in the scripture testimony, the hope of life eternal is predicated on the immutable counsel and unchangeable purposes of God. Paul speaks of "the hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began." And John speaking of the RECORD which God hath given of his son, says, "and this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his son." Paul, speaking of that

Gospel in which life and immortality is brought to light, declares that God preached it to Abraham, saying, "in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." This promise the apostle informs us, was confirmed by the oath of Jehovah, that "by two immutable things, (viz. the promise and the oath) we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

In evidence then, that our desires for salvation shall be realized, we have the promise of God, confirmed by his oath, beside which, we can have nothing more satisfactory or convincing to the mind, and with which, we are fully persuaded, that what God has promised he is able to accomplish, as he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Possessed of this ample testimony, which leaves no room for doubt or uncertainty, we are enabled in humble confidence to enjoy the hope set before us in the gospel, and in the day of affliction and distress, listen to the heart cheering instruction, "flee to the strong hold ye prisoners of hope."

TO BE CONTINUED.

From the Unitarian Miscellany.

New Work proposed by Rammohun Roy.

In reading the preface to Rammohun Roy's *Final Appeal to the Christian Public*, our attention was powerfully arrested by the following proposal for a monthly theological publication.

"As christianity is happily not a subject resting on vague metaphysical speculations, but is founded upon the authority of books written in languages, which are understood and explained according to known and standing rules, I therefore propose, with a view to the more speedy and certain attainment of religious truth, to establish a monthly periodical publication, commencing from the month of April next, to be devoted to Biblical criticism, and to subject unitarian as well as trinitarian doctrines to the test of fair argument, if those of the latter persuasion will consent thus to submit the scriptural grounds on which their tenets concerning the Trinity are built.

"For the sake of method and convenience, I propose that, beginning with the Book of Genesis, and taking all the passages in that portion of Scripture, which are thought to countenance the doctrine of the Trinity, we should examine them one by one, and publish our observations upon them; and that next month we proceed in the same manner with the Book of Exodus, and so on with all the Books of the Old and New Testaments, in their regular order.

"If any one of the Missionary Gentlemen, for himself and in behalf of his fellow labourers, choose to profit by the opportunity thus afforded them of defending and diffusing the doctrines they have undertaken to preach, I request that an Essay on the Book of Genesis of the kind above intimated may be sent me by the middle of the month, and if confined within reasonable limits not exceeding a dozen or sixteen pages, I hereby engage to cause it to be printed and circulated at my own charge, should the Missionary Gentlemen refuse to bestow any part of the funds, intended for the spread of Christianity, towards this object; and also that a reply (not exceeding the same number of pages) to the arguments adduced, shall be published along with it by the beginning of the ensuing month. That this new mode of controversy by short monthly publications may be attended with all the advantages which I, in common with other searchers after truth, expect, and of which it is capable, it will be absolutely necessary that nothing be introduced of a personal nature, or calculated to hurt the feelings of individuals--that we avoid all offensive expressions, and such arguments as have no im-

mediate connexion with the subject, and can only serve to retard the progress of discovery; and that we never allow ourselves for a moment to forget that we are engaged in a solemn religious disputation."

Whether this work will ever be commenced and prosecuted, we know not. There will doubtless be many obstacles to it; some of them arising unexpectedly, and some purposely created by interested men. But it is enough to increase our former admiration of this wonderful Hindoo, that he has announced such an undertaking. A periodical publication, devoted to the *exegesis*, as Professor Stuart would call it, of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, to be carried on by a Bramin of Hindostan, in the English language, at his own expense, with his own types, and at a press which is worked by his own countrymen! Who would have ventured to predict such a thing twenty years ago?

It has been for some time one of our most pleasing contemplations to mark the path of this man. It is a track of light in a dark sky. We cannot despair of the conversion of British India, at no very distant period, to a pure system of religion and morals, while we behold such a man as Rammohun Roy, labouring with all his heart and all his means, in the cause of reason, and knowledge, and truth.

Installation at Brooklyn.

On Wednesday, the fifth of November, the Rev. Samuel Joseph May was installed Pastor of the First Church and Society in Brooklyn, Connecticut. Introductory prayer by Rev. Mr. Wilson, of Petersham; sermon by Rev. Mr. Walker, of Charlestown, (from 1 Corinthians, i. 23, 24); consecrating prayer by Rev. Dr. Bancroft, of Worcester; charge by Rev. Dr. Freeman, of Boston; right hand of fellowship, by Rev. Mr. Peabody of Springfield; address to the people, by Rev. Dr. Thayer, of Lancaster; concluding prayer, by Rev. Mr. Parkman, of Boston.

This installation is an encouraging sign of the times. It announces to the friends of Gospel freedom, that liberal principles of religion, and liberal views of Christianity, have at length gained a footing in Connecticut. The spirit of exclusiveness is passing away, the glory of *consociations* is on the wane, and we trust that it will wax no more. The people are beginning to resist the usurpations of a narrow-minded clergy, and to disregard the pretensions which have so long been made, and so long been admitted, to the exercise of an unhallowed authority over mind, and faith, and conscience. We devoutly hope, that the congregation at Brooklyn is not the only one in that state, which has determined to incur the disgrace no longer, of bowing down their souls in slavish submission to the men who have placed themselves on the spiritual judgment seat, and dared to arrogate a power over those thoughts and determinations of the human mind, which God alone can rightly discern, & which God alone will righteously judge. We hope to hear no more of ministers being haled before an ecclesiastical court, for studying the Bible, to discover its true meaning; or of their being torn from their parishes, for declaring the result of their honest convictions. We hope that the monstrous inconsistency will no longer exist, of a protestant people in a free land, submitting to a clerical dominion as despotic as that of Rome in the dark ages.

The gentleman who is now installed over the first church in Brooklyn, we are sure will labour effectually in sowing the seeds of an enlightened faith, and spreading abroad in his neighborhood the simple and unalloyed truths of christianity.—*ib.*

From the (N. Y.) Gospel Herald.

NEWS FROM SCOTLAND.

We have received another epistle from our Br. Worrall, dated Glasgow, Oct. 11, 1823, from which we extract the following:

"We have received an epistle from a small church at Colerain, in the north of Ireland; of which we had not before heard. It is certain that liberal views of the Divine economy, and rational ideas of the Creator's purpose and design in Redemption, are extending their mild and genial influence around us. May the Great Head of the Church prepare and send forth labourers into the Gospel harvest, who may be powerfully successful in making inroads into the kingdom of darkness, instrumental in dissipating the gloom of prejudice, and successful in counteracting the efforts of priest-craft.

"I admire the liberality and forbearance so long practised among American Universalists; and shall feel unspeakably rejoiced to know that they continue united in sentiment upon the Rock of Ages, Christ Jesus, and preserve the unity of the spirit in the bonds of heavenly peace. The duration of punishment, we may consider a matter of minor importance. JEHOVAH afflicts not willingly, nor unnecessarily grieves the children of men. Not a stripe will be inflicted more than is required for the good of the chastised."

Our Br. Worrall for himself, and on behalf of our brethren in Glasgow, tenders grateful acknowledgments to those who have forwarded books, and "administered to the intellectual pleasure and gratification" of our distant Brethren.

AN AWFUL WARNING.

"Among others whom he [Swedenborg] repeatedly saw, was *Joha Calvin*. Of the condition of *Calvin* in the future world we have the following picture: that at his death, it was sometime before the angels could convince him that he had actually exchanged worlds; that his followers were all confined in dungeons and caves, because they believed the doctrine of predestination; that he himself was miserably lonesome, having none with whom he could associate; that for a long time he hid himself in a dark corner; that he next lodged in the house of harlots; and finally, Swedenborg left him shut up in a cave with his followers, where they laboured for their food, and made it their business and delight to quarrel and do each other mischief."

Christian Mirror.

RELIGION wants less said about the theory, and more done in the way of practice.

Love, Charity, and Truth want more real friends.

Pride wants to be discarded, and modest Diffidence introduced.

DIED,

At Barre, (Vt.) on the 11th ult. at the house of his son, the Rev. WILLIAM FARWELL, aged 74. He remained firm in the belief "That the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," and met death with Christian fortitude and resignation, giving, in the manner of his death, the lie to the hackneyed assertion, "that a belief in Universal Salvation, may do to live by, but will not do to die by."

LOST, on the 25th of Nov. last, from on board the brig Sea Island of Hartford, H. Barnard, master, on her passage from New-London to Matanzas, Mr. HENRY CARRIQUE, aged 20, son of the Rev. R. Carrique, editor of this paper. So perished a promising and active youth in the morning of life, beloved by all who knew him. Mysterious are thy ways, O Father of Spirits—yet art thou just, merciful and good. May all in affliction say from the heart, "Thy will be done."

POETRY.

[SELECTED.]

DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

'Tis not in scenes of festive pleasure,
Splendid equipage and dress,
Hoarded heaps of glittering treasure,—
Can bestow true happiness.

No, the sweetest joy arises
From domestic, dear delights;
Where the peace, that virtue prizes,
With attractive power unites.

Far from scenes of sad vexation,
Happy they who can remove,
To their tranquil habitation,
Blest with competence and love.

Where good nature, ever smiling,
Kindles joy in every heart;
And affection, grief beguiling,
Sweetest pleasure can impart.

Piety, the scene adorning
With a lustre all divine,
Brings to view the glorious morning
When their joys shall brighter shine.

Earth's delights at best are fleeting,
Every pleasure has its pain;
But when these are all retreating
'Tis to bloom more fair again.

O how lovely is the dwelling
Where such joys as these abound;
Each enjoyment sure foretelling,
All with glory shall be crown'd.

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AND FOR SALE AT THIS OFFICE.

The UNIVERSALIST HYMN BOOK: a new collection of Psalms and Hymns, for the use of Universalist Societies.—(single or doz.)

BALLOU, ON ATONEMENT.

BALLOU'S NOTES ON THE PARABLES.

Do. ELEVEN SERMONS.

Do. CATECHISM.

Also—A discourse delivered June 4th at the Installation of Rev. David Pickering, by Rev. JOHN EISE, JR.

And a number of other Pamphlets, favoring the doctrine of Universal Salvation.

NOTICE.

Subscribers to the "RELIGIOUS INQUIRER" who wish their Volumes Bound, are informed that by sending them to this Office, they can have them bound in a handsome manner, and probably much cheaper than they can get them done elsewhere.—Should any wish to improve this opportunity, they will hand them in as soon as possible.

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